



## Istanbul +5: The United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly for an Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda, New York, 6-8 June 2001

### Urbanization and Globalization

Cities have been around since the 3rd millennium B.C. And as long as they have existed, people have been drawn to them for what they offer. As recently as 1800, however, only 2 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas. Today, with 6 billion people on earth, slightly less than one-half live in cities and towns; by 2007 one half of them will. In the century ahead, urban centres are expected to expand to sizes never before seen. Fifty years ago, metropolitan New York was the only urban centre with a population of more than 10 million; today, there are 19 such cities. During the same 50-year period, the number of cities with more than one million inhabitants increased more than fourfold — from 80 to 365.

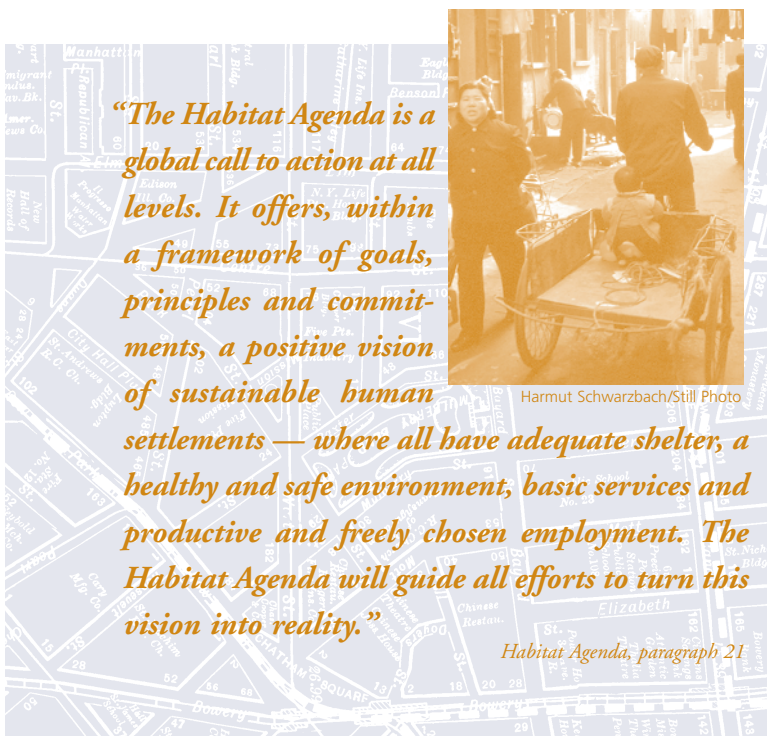
In the developed world, urbanization is a familiar phenomenon. Perhaps less well known is that Latin America and the Caribbean are already highly urbanized, with 75 per cent of

their populations residing in urban areas. But Africa and Asia, both still predominantly rural, face an explosive demographic shift, as their urban populations surge from 35 per cent to over 50 per cent in the next 30 years.

Urbanization and globalization are modern-day facts of life. Today's cities must compete with one another to attract capital. To do so, many local authorities offer attractive financial incentives in addition to essential practical ones, such as well-functioning infrastructure and urban services, communications systems, efficient transport, sufficient housing and access to educational and recreational facilities. But in the new "urban archipelago" of competitive cities linked by today's globalized economy, the riches are passed from one wealthy hand to another. The poor have been left behind.

### The Urbanization of Poverty

Poverty can be found in cities everywhere. But in cities in the developing world, it is deeper and more widespread. A child born in a city in a least-developed country is 22 times more likely to die by the age of five than his counterpart born in a city in a developed country. In richer countries, less than 16 per cent of all urban households live in poverty. But in urban areas in developing countries, 36 per cent of all households and 41 per cent of all woman-headed households live with incomes below the locally-defined poverty line. The urbanization and feminization of poverty have resulted in over one billion poor people living in urban areas without adequate shelter or access to basic services.



*"The Habitat Agenda is a global call to action at all levels. It offers, within a framework of goals, principles and commitments, a positive vision of sustainable human settlements — where all have adequate shelter, a healthy and safe environment, basic services and productive and freely chosen employment. The Habitat Agenda will guide all efforts to turn this vision into reality."*

*Habitat Agenda, paragraph 21*

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Shelley Rotner (UN Photo)

*Globalization's failure to serve the needs of the urban poor is one of many critical topics that the international community will address at Istanbul+5.*



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Hiroshi Kubota/Magnum

## Habitat II: The Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration

In 1996, recognizing the urgency of the urban explosion, the international community convened the second global conference on human settlements in Istanbul. At Habitat II, — the “City Summit”, as it is commonly known — 171 Governments voted to adopt the Habitat Agenda and Istanbul Declaration.

The adoption of the Habitat Agenda marked a turning point in international efforts to promote socially and environmentally sustainable cities. Habitat II rejected the notion that cities are problems for which no solutions can be found. Instead, it searched for experiences and best practices that demonstrate practical ways of meeting the challenges of urbanization. Participants at the Conference recognized that more holistic, inclusive and participatory policies are needed to improve the living environment in the world's cities.

When the international community adopted the Habitat Agenda, it set itself the twin goals of achieving adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development.

## Istanbul + 5

Istanbul +5 is a critical time for the future of human settlements. Five years after the Istanbul conference, representatives of all Member States and their partners from civil society will meet at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly to review and appraise worldwide implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

This is the time and place for Governments and the international community to commit themselves to future actions and further initiatives to implement the Habitat Agenda. During the Special Session, Governments will be called upon to consider and endorse a declaration concerned with the future of cities. At the same time, a variety of parallel events designed to raise awareness about important issues in the new “urban millennium” have been scheduled.



Thomas Raupachy/Still Pictures

## Report on the Overall Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Habitat Agenda

To assess progress made, Governments were asked during the preparatory process to submit reports on both national and local implementation of the Agenda, including their views and those of their various partners. These national reports have been consolidated and were considered at five regional preparatory meetings. Now, at Istanbul+5, the findings will be presented by the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat), Mrs. Anna Tibaijuka, in her summary report on the overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Many themes emerge in the report:

- Urbanization and globalization have accelerated dramatically since Habitat II and have contributed to an increase in urban poverty. Thus, it is important to view implementation of the Habitat Agenda within an international context.
- Armed conflicts often cause rapid rural-to-urban migration. Rehabilitation of small towns and cities is necessary to re-settle refugees and internally displaced persons.



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*“Governments have the primary responsibility for implementing the Habitat Agenda. Governments as enabling partners should create and strengthen effective partnerships with women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, indigenous people and communities, local authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in each country...”*

*Habitat Agenda, paragraph 213*

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- Emerging priorities have been identified, including urban governance, housing rights, basic services, civil conflict, urban violence and the urban environment.
- The review process has reconfirmed that actions that actually improve the quality of life of people, particularly the poor, are usually designed and implemented at the local level. For that reason, consolidation of partnerships among UNCHS, the UN system and local authorities is essential.



Shelley Rotner (UN Photo)

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## The Thematic Committee

Building on Habitat's inclusion of civil society partners at the Istanbul conference, the General

## Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium

At the Special Session, world leaders and delegations will negotiate and are expected to sign a "Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium" and to commit themselves to forward-looking strategies designed to improve conditions in cities, towns and villages. Many issues are highlighted in the draft Declaration. The Declaration will:

- re-confirm the goals of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development;
- recognize the importance of 'integrated and participatory' approaches;
- support the need for greater decentralization to improve the effectiveness of local authorities;
- recognize the many gaps and obstacles encountered in implementing the Habitat Agenda; and
- ask Governments to reaffirm their commitment to the Habitat Agenda.

Assembly decided to establish a Thematic Committee at Istanbul + 5 in June that would be open to participation by both Member States and Habitat Agenda partners. Its purpose is to provide a venue for presentations and dialogues about experiences and lessons learned in human settlements development during the five years since Habitat II. With a stated goal of guiding "the quest for solutions and progress that will benefit all of the world's citizens", the Committee will meet five times during Istanbul+5. Countries and Habitat partners have submitted presentations from which a selection of 16 cases has been made on the basis of geographic representation and coverage of themes and elements.

## Parallel Events

Before and during the conference, Habitat will launch both its "Global Report on Human Settlements" and its "State of the World's Cities Report". Mayors, representatives of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, UN agencies and other Habitat Agenda partners have also been invited to hold parallel events to showcase their recent work in human settlements development.



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THE SPECIAL UNITED NATIONS SESSION OF THE GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HABITAT AGENDA

# URBAN MILLENNIUM

*Everyone deserves*

*... a decent place to live*



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Oddbjorn Monsen (UN Photo)

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UNITED NATIONS



UNCHS (HABITAT)

# URBAN MILLENNIUM

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Shelley Rotner/UN Photo

*... a decent place to live*

## The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

UNCHS (Habitat) in Nairobi, Kenya, is the Secretariat for the preparatory process of Istanbul+5. Established in 1978, Habitat is the lead agency within the UN system for coordinating activities in the field of human settlements. Since 1996, Habitat has been the focal point for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. In its recent efforts to achieve the goals of "adequate shelter for all" and "sustainable human settlements development", Habitat has focused its activities on advocacy and rights-based approaches. It has initiated two campaigns: the Global Campaign on Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance.

In these two campaigns, Habitat will work closely with all levels of government and other Habitat Agenda partners, especially those representing the urban poor, with these aims:

- to encourage shelter policies and security of tenure for the poor;
- to encourage transparent, accountable and inclusive urban governance;
- to promote the role of women in urban development;
- to raise awareness of the need for social justice;
- to develop and encourage national policies likely to reduce urban poverty.

In its efforts to improve Government policies and strengthen their institutional capacities, Habitat provides a wide range of advisory services and technical assistance, both to Governments and to local authorities. It focuses its operational activities on housing and urban development; infrastructure, water supply and basic services; environmental planning and management; disaster management; municipal finance and management; urban safety and security; and participatory approaches to decision making.

# Habitat Agenda: Key Commitments and Strategies



## Shelter

- equal access to land;
- security of tenure;
- the right to adequate housing;
- equal access to credit;
- access to basic services.

## Social Development and Eradication of Poverty

- equal opportunities for a healthy and safe life;
- social integration of disadvantaged groups;
- gender equality.

## Environmental Management

- geographically balanced settlement structures;
- effective management of supply and demand for water;
- reductions in urban pollution;
- disaster-prevention and rebuilding of settlements;
- effective and environmentally sound transportation systems;
- mechanisms to prepare and implement local environmental plans and local Agenda 21 initiatives.

## Economic Development

- to strengthen small and micro-enterprises, particularly those developed by women;
- to encourage public-private sector partnerships;
- to stimulate productive employment opportunities.

## Governance

- decentralization and strengthening of local authorities;
- participation and civic engagement;
- transparent, accountable and efficient governance of towns, cities and metropolitan areas.

## International Cooperation

- enhanced international cooperation and partnerships.